

CANDIDATE INFORMATION HANDBOOK

EMBALMER EXAMINATION

2000



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CEMETERY AND FUNERAL BUREAU

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE EXAMINATION

California law requires each candidate for licensure as an embalmer to pass an examination. The purpose of the examination is to determine whether the candidate has the knowledge needed to provide safe and effective services to the public. The examination addresses knowledge of practical embalming and of the laws and regulations related to embalming.

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

California Business and Professions Code Section 7640 describes an embalmer as a person who:

1. Disinfects or preserves human remains by the injection or external application of antiseptics, disinfectants or preservative fluids;
2. Prepares human bodies for transportation which are dead of contagious or infectious diseases,
3. Uses derma surgery or plastic art for restoring mutilated features.
4. Is duly licensed as an embalmer under the laws of the State of California.

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT

The examination is developed and maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs (Department), Office of Examination Resources (OER). The individual test items are written by licensed embalmers under the guidance of OER analysts.

CHAPTER 2. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Upon receiving an application, the Bureau will write to the applicant regarding its status. If the application is incomplete, the letter will indicate what additional information the applicant must provide. Within 120 days of receiving a completed application from an eligible applicant, the Bureau will notify the applicant to appear for examination and specify the time and place.

ABANDONMENT OF APPLICATION

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations Section 1254, the Department considers an application abandoned if a candidate fails to take the examination within 1 year after being notified of eligibility. Failure to appear at a scheduled examination without prior notice is also considered abandonment. In the event of abandonment, a candidate must submit a new application with the required fee and meet all requirements at the time of filing. Fees submitted at the time of application are not reimbursed when an application is abandoned.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

All examination locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Bureau grants requests for special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to receive consideration, any request must specify the accommodation desired and must be accompanied by a letter from an appropriate licensed professional that confirms the disability and supports the usefulness of the accommodation. Requests and substantiating documentation must be submitted at least 30 days before the examination.

CHAPTER 3. PREPARATION FOR THE EXAMINATION

OVERVIEW

The embalmer examination is based upon a test plan developed by licensed embalmers. The plan identifies aspects of practice related to the tasks that an embalmer must be able to perform at licensure. The examination contains 150 multiple-choice items that address six areas of job content, and it has a time limit of 3 hours.

DESCRIPTION OF JOB CONTENT AREAS

The embalmer examination covers six content areas that define the scope of knowledge needed for safe and effective practice. The number of items that address each content area reflects its relative importance to practice.

- I. *EMBALMING SCIENCE* - 19 items: Covers knowledge of human anatomical systems and their relevance to the embalming process; chemical compositions, functions, reactions, and dilutions of fluids; and common diseases and their consequences for embalming.
- II. *CASE ANALYSIS* - 19 items: Covers assessment of the body and preliminary decisions regarding methods and chemicals to be used.
- III. *EMBALMING* - 44 items: Covers the feasibility of and procedures for embalming by arterial injection; procedures to use in special cases; and the methods and chemicals to use for bodies displaying signs of death by natural causes, fatal infectious or contagious diseases, or unnatural causes.
- IV. *RESTORATIVE ART* - 29 items: Covers determination and application of restorative procedures needed for particular bodies, including those showing emaciation or trauma.
- V. *PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY* - 20 items: Covers application of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and Materials Safety Data Sheets to embalming practice; rationales for and uses of universal precautions, precautions against radioactivity; and procedures related to disinfection, sanitation, and hazardous waste disposal.
- VI. *LAW AND ETHICS* - 19 items: Covers sections of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC), Business and Professions Code (BPC), and the California Code of Regulations (CCR) that concern embalming practice.

EXAMINATION OUTLINE

The examination outline identifies the knowledge required to demonstrate acceptable competence in each of the major content areas. Content areas I–V specify practical knowledge. Content area VI includes references to applicable statutes and provisions of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, the California Health and Safety Code, and the Business and Professions Code. Candidates should acquire the knowledge that the outline describes before attempting the examination.

I. EMBALMING SCIENCE – 19 ITEMS

<i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should understand human anatomical systems and their relevance to the embalming process; the chemical compositions, functions, reactions, and dilutions of fluids; and common diseases and their consequences for embalming.</i>	
A. Embalming Anatomy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anatomical nomenclature 2. Anatomical and linear guides 3. Arterial and venous systems 4. Musculoskeletal systems 5. Integumentary system 6. Internal organ systems
B. Embalming Chemistry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical nomenclature 2. Chemical compositions, dilutions, functions, reactions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Environmental chemicals <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) sterilizing 2) disinfecting b. Embalming chemicals <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) internal 2) external
C. Embalming Pathology and Microbiology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nomenclature of pathology and microbiology 2. Types of microbes, consequences of each type for embalming 3. Identifying disease in a decedent; consequences of common diseases for embalming

II. CASE ANALYSIS – 19 ITEMS

<i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should be able to assess the condition of the body and make preliminary decisions regarding methods and chemicals to be used.</i>	
A. Gross Examination	Assessment of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wounds 2. Diseases 3. Tissue condition 4. Size, age, sex 5. Discoloration, lividity, rigor mortis 6. Time lapse since death 7. Duration of refrigeration
B. Preliminary Decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embalming method(s) 2. Embalming chemicals

III. EMBALMING – 44 ITEMS

<i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should be able to determine the feasibility of embalming by arterial injection; the procedures appropriate for autopsied and unautopsied cases and for infants; and the treatments appropriate for bodies dead of natural causes, fatal infectious or contagious diseases, or unnatural causes.</i>	
A. Washing and Disinfecting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body surface and hair 2. Orifices
B. Positioning the Body and Setting the Features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate body position 2. Alternate methods for feature setting 3. Choice of appropriate method
C. Embalming by Arterial Injection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemicals and primary dilutions 2. Equipment for administering chemicals 3. Selection of primary site of arterial injection; incision 4. Selection of primary site for venous drainage; incision 5. Instruments 6. Pressure and rate of flow 7. Appropriate volume distribution and diffusion 8. Appropriate use of suture materials and patterns 9. Sealing and closure
D. Special Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procedures supplemental to arterial injection <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hypodermic injection b. Packing 2. Embalming an autopsied case by injection(s) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selection of arteries and veins b. Chemical dilutions c. Continuous aspiration of cavity fluids d. Treatment of cranial area e. Restoration of calvarium f. Sealing and closure 3. Cavity embalming: non-autopsied case <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Immediate vs. delayed cavity treatment b. Aspiration of body fluids from hollow organs c. Replacement with cavity fluid d. Sealing and closure 4. Cavity embalming: autopsied case <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Treatment of viscera (liquid vs. powder) b. Treatment of abdominal and thoracic cavity walls (liquid, powder, gel) c. Hazards: sharp, exposed ribs; chemical contact d. Sealing and closure

D. Special Procedures (continued)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Embalming infants (unique aspects only) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Heart methods b. Abdominal aorta method c. Vattening/external packing d. Chemical dilutions e. Mouth closure f. Positioning g. Cranial treatment after autopsy h. Infectious and contagious diseases i. Radioactive cases 6. Choosing fluids, calculating dilutions, and choosing methods of fluid administration for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Burn victims b. Decomposed bodies c. Bodies discolored by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Jaundice 2) CO poisoning d. Edematous bodies e. Dehydrated bodies f. Bodies from which organs have been harvested g. Trauma victims
E. Post-Embalming Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaks 2. Tissue condition 3. Odor 4. Color 5. Purge 6. Distensions 7. Cleanliness 8. Overall appearance

IV. RESTORATIVE ART– 29 ITEMS

<p><i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should be able to determine what restorative procedures are required for particular bodies, including those showing emaciation or trauma, and to apply restorative techniques to cases presenting various physical conditions.</i></p>	
A. Nomenclature	
B. Instruments	
C. Pre-Embalming Phase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Temporary sutures 2. Cleaning and creaming 3. Beginning fracture repairs 4. Setting features

D. Embalming Phase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing swelling 2. Maintaining features and position 3. Correcting discoloration 4. Applying needed sutures
E. Post-Embalming Phase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treating abrasions and lacerations 2. Bleaching discolorations 3. Treating burned areas 4. Excising and rebuilding tissue 5. Correcting decapitation 6. Correcting distentions 7. Treating desquamation 8. Treating cancerous areas 9. Completing fracture repairs 10. Restoring hair 11. Rebuilding tissue hypodermically 12. Reattaching severed limb, reconstructing missing limb 13. Removing and preventing mold growth 14. Treating discolored nails 15. Correcting twisted limbs 16. Treating penetrating wounds 17. Treating razor burns 18. Applying needed tissue closures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sutures b. Adhesives 19. Rebuilding features as needed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anatomy of each feature b. Proportion and position of each feature based on facial symmetry and photographs c. Materials needed d. Techniques to use 20. Restoring color <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Applying color theory b. Applying appropriate materials c. Using appropriate techniques

V. PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY – 20 ITEMS

<i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should apply specifications of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and Materials Safety Data Sheets to embalming practice; understand rationales for and uses of universal precautions, understand precautions against radioactivity; and, perform procedures related to disinfection, sanitization, and hazardous waste disposal.</i>	
A. Nomenclature	
B. OSHA Requirements, Materials Safety Data Sheets	
C. Universal Precautions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protective outer wear, respirators 2. Containment of fluid-borne and airborne pathogens <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Diseases and disease vectors b. Methods of control, disposal of biohazardous wastes, disposal of “sharps” 3. Vaccinations (hepatitis, tetanus) 4. Limiting exposure to radioactivity
D. Disinfecting, Sterilizing, and Sanitizing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Methods and materials for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Instruments b. Equipment c. Preparation room d. Decedent, before and after embalming e. Embalmer’s own person 2. Logging the procedures performed
E. Using and Controlling Hazardous Chemicals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formaldehyde, formaldehyde mixed with bleach 2. Phenol 3. Methanol 4. Exposure limits and methods of detection 5. Dealing with spills <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On embalmer b. Elsewhere 6. Safe storage of chemicals 7. Collodion fire hazard 8. Dye hazard to the eyes

VI. LAW AND ETHICS – 19 ITEMS

<i>DESCRIPTION: The candidate should be able to apply Health and Safety Code (HSC), Business and Professions Code (BPC), and Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) relating to embalming practice and to identify unprofessional conduct in an embalmer.</i>	
A. Nomenclature	
B. Health and Safety Code	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining permission of coroner to embalm <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown cause of death (HSC §7300) Death associated with crime (HSC §7301) Moving vehicle involved with death (HSC §7303) Reporting contagious cases to local health officer (HSC §7302) Obtaining permission from person with right to control remains (HSC §7304)
C. Embalmer's Signature	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Signature and license number required on death certificate (HSC §102875; BPC §7649) Power of attorney required to allow another to sign certificate (HSC §102805) Embalming by apprentice under embalmer's license (CCR §1229 (b); BPC §7606)
D. Supervision of Apprentices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Qualification to train an apprentice (BPC §7660) Certifying to apprentice's reports (BPC §7665) Penalties for failure to comply with state reporting requirements (BPC §7665) Limit on number of apprentices (BPC §7670 (b)) Requirements for supervision <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Direct supervision of apprentice's first 25 cases (CCR §1229 (a)) Inspection of later cases (CCR §1229 (b))
E. Funeral Directors and Embalmers Act	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Display of license (BPC §7680)

F. Unprofessional Conduct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revealing confidences concerning the deceased 2. Allowing unauthorized entry to the preparation room during embalming 3. Violating the physical privacy of the body 4. Using profane or obscene language while preparing a body for removal or disposition 5. Mutilating a body 6. Harvesting organs or tissues in violation of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act or allowing such a violation 7. Selling body parts 8. Using the preparation room for unauthorized purposes (storage, eating, drinking, smoking) 9. Removing or possessing dental gold or silver, jewelry, clothing, or mementos
G. Other Laws or Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embalmer must request permission to embalm, state that effects of embalming are temporary and not required by law (CCR §1214) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make request to person authorized to control remains (HSC §7304) b. Obtain later confirmation of oral permission in writing (CCR §1214) 2. Sanitizing instruments, equipment and room; disposing of wastes are responsibilities of embalmer (CCR §1216 (b), (c)) 3. Who may be present during embalming is specified. (CCR §1221 (a)) 4. Embalming fluids may not contain heavy minerals (CCR §1222)
H. Training Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documented training and instruction (BPC §7635)

CHAPTER 4. DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

REQUISITE MATERIALS FOR ADMITTANCE

Candidates must report to the registration area at the time and date specified on a notice of admittance for the examination. The proctors will collect the notice of admittance and ask to see official identification with photograph, such as a driver's license or passport. Candidates who do not bring the notice of admittance and appropriate identification will **NOT** be allowed to participate in the examination.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Candidates should be prepared to place handbags, briefcases, and other such personal belongings away from the examination table. The proctors will provide instructions regarding registration, seat assignments, completion of examination materials, and other steps in the examination process.

Section 123 of the Business and Professions Code prohibits any person who takes the examination from engaging in any conduct that undermines or attempts to undermine any licensing examination or the administration of a licensing examination. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, obstructing the standardized administration of the examination, removing examination materials from the examination room, communicating examination information to another person, copying answers from another person, using unauthorized books, equipment, notes or other printed materials during the examination, and permitting an impersonator take the examination. The full text of the section is provided in Appendix A. Violation of Section 123 will result in disqualification from the examination and possible denial of a license.

CHAPTER 5. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

RELEASE OF RESULTS

The Bureau will notify candidates of examination results in writing within 8 weeks of the scheduled examination date. If the results do not arrive within 9 weeks of the examination date, submit a written request to the Department for a duplicate copy of your results.

Examination results will not be released by telephone or in response to a personal visit.

PASSING SCORE

Each passing score is established by a panel of licensed embalmers who apply competence criteria for safe and effective practice. The score varies moderately from examination to examination, being higher for a test judged relatively easy and lower for a test judged relatively difficult. Although the score varies, it always reflects a fixed criterion, the least competence acceptable in a licensed California embalmer.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Applicants and candidates must notify the Department in writing of any change of address. Allow 30 days for the change of address to be processed. The Department is **NOT** responsible for changes made over the telephone.

RE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates who fail the examination must submit a new application with the required fee by the final filing date.

APPENDIX A - BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE

Sections 123 and 496 of the Business and Professions Code have been reprinted in the following paragraphs. They specify what the law considers examination misbehavior and what actions will be taken when an examination candidate exhibits such conduct.

Business and Professions Code Section 123

It is a misdemeanor for any person to engage in any conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of an examination, including, but not limited to:

(a) Conduct which violates the security of the examination materials; removing from the examination room any examination materials without authorization; the unauthorized reproduction by any means of any portion of the actual licensing examination; aiding by any means the unauthorized reproduction of any portion of the actual licensing examination; paying or using professional or paid examination-takers for the purpose of reconstructing any portion of the licensing examination; obtaining examination questions or other examination material, except by specific authorization either before, during, or after an examination; or using or purporting to use any examination questions or materials which were improperly removed or taken from any examination for the purpose of instructing or preparing any applicant for examination; or selling, distributing, buying, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a future, current, or previously administered licensing examination.

(b) Communicating with any other examinee during the administration of a licensing examination; copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee; having in one's possession during the administration of the licensing examination any books, equipment, notes, written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed or otherwise authorized to be in one's possession during the examination; or impersonating any examinee or having an impersonator take the licensing examination on one's behalf.

Nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution under the authority provided for in any other provision of law.

In addition to any other penalties, a person found guilty of violating this section, shall be liable for the actual damages sustained by the agency administering the examination not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the costs of litigation.

(c) If any provision of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

Business and Professions Code Section 496

A board may deny, suspend, revoke or otherwise restrict a license on the ground that an applicant or licensee has violated Section 123 pertaining to subversion of licensing examinations.